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Charles Deane Esqr
With the Kind regards of
Wm Willis

VOYAGES

TO THE

EAST COAST OF AMERICA,

IN THE XVI. CENTURY.

BY

WILLIAM WILLIS.

Reprinted from the NEW-ENGLAND HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL REGISTER for April, 1869.

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BOSTON:
PRINTED BY DAVID CLAPP & SON.
1869.

104,521

SUMMARY OF VOYAGES TO THE NORTHERN ATLANTIC COAST OF AMERICA IN THE 16th CENTURY.

It is a curious fact in geography as well as history, that notwithstanding the great excitement which followed the discovery of the American continent, no part of it lying north of Florida was colonized for more than one hundred years after the first great voyage of the Cabots, in 1497. *They* appear to have sailed directly across the ocean from Bristol to Newfoundland or Cape Breton; they saw no inhabitants; and returned sadly disappointed that their fondly hoped passage to Cathay was obstructed by this inhospitable stretch of land. On his second voyage in 1498, Sebastian Cabot skirted the coast from Davis Straits to Cape Hatteras, peering anxiously into open spaces only to find the new way to the Indies. He touched at several places, of which he has left no account, nor given us any information in regard to the country.

This second voyage produced so little impression upon the public mind of England, as to fall into neglect. His object, and the dream of his long life, was, to find a short passage to the rich fields of India, by the west, as the Portuguese had before discovered the long passage by the way of "Good Hope," to the great fame of da Gama, its discoverer, and the glory and prosperity of the nation which had despatched him on his mission.

Cabot's first voyage was conducted by John the father in a single vessel, accompanied by Sebastian, his son, then about twenty years old. The whole voyage occupied but three months, from May to August, 1497, but was of the highest importance as revealing the fact of the existence of a great continent lying in the west. This astonishing fact, especially gratifying to the English nation, as the first discoverer, led the next year to more extended preparations for continuing their discoveries, and with full confidence that the grand object of their pursuit, the western passage to Cathay, would crown their exertions.

A fleet of five vessels was placed under Sebastian Cabot, who with a large company of volunteers sailed from Bristol in May, 1498; he reached[1] the coast at Newfoundland or Labrador in July, which he followed to the north-east, until he encountered ice in such quantities as to check his further advance in that direction; he then turned south, and proceeded as far as Cape Hatteras, examining the coast at various points to find his hoped-for route to India. He encountered on these examinations the native inhabitants, and made observa-

[1] Mr. Charles Deane, in his remarks on Sebastian Cabot's "*Mappe Monde*," before the American Antiquarian Society, April, 1867, says, "The land first seen is clearly indicated on the map, and *prima vista*, and again *prima tierra vista*, are marked upon it: and it is very certain that it is neither Newfoundland nor Labrador, but Cape Breton." In a note he adds, "Michael Lok's map, published by Hakluyt, 1582, made according to 'Verazano's plat,' has a delineation of 'C. Breton' upon it, on which is inscribed 'J. Cabot, 1497.'" This of course applies to the first voyage, and the discovery by John Cabot. The land which Sebastian first made in 1498, is not definitely known. This view of the "prima vista" of Cabot is not conceded, and is opposed by weighty arguments which have been adduced by Dr. Kohl in the first volume, second series, of the *Maine Historical Collections*, just published.

tions in regard to their character and customs. This was the last voyage to the north performed by the Cabots; the spirit which excited them seems wholly to have died away, probably from failure of the great object of their search, and no attempt was made to renew them by the English for many years.

In the mean time, however, other nations were stirred by the example of England, to enter upon this new field of adventure. The Portuguese, under their brilliant and enterprising monarch, Emanuel, were the first to move in the northern, as they had been the earliest in the southern hemisphere. In the year 1500, an expedition was fitted out at Lisbon, and placed under the command of Gaspard de Cortereal for northern discovery. This intelligent navigator, sailing on a northwest course, reached the American coast, but at what point we have no means of knowing, probably at some part of Newfoundland; and sailing north as far as Greenland, he returned to Lisbon in the autumn. We have no particulars of this first voyage of Cortereal, and the only notice we have of it, is from records recently discovered in the archives of Portugal and referred to by Dr. Kohl in his account of the early voyages to America, contained in the first volume, second series, of the Maine Historical Collections.

Of Cortereal's second voyage, we have more full information from various sources, by which it appears that he sailed from Lisbon, May 15, 1501, with two, some say three ships, and pursuing a west northwest course for two thousand Italian miles, he reached the coast of Newfoundland, and continued in a northerly direction six or seven hundred miles further, until his passage was obstructed by ice. He then turned south, and after seizing fifty-seven natives of the country, probably Esquimaux from Labrador, he commenced his homeward voyage. But unfortunately, only one ship returned to Lisbon, arriving early in October, 1501; the other, with the noble commander, and fifty of the slaves, was never heard of after. The country thus visited and plundered was named *Labrador* from the Portuguese word signifying "labórer;" it is also called on some early maps "Corterealis," or coast of Cortereal.

The next year, 1502, his brother Miguel was sent in pursuit of his lost brother and crew, and he also perished: no account of either was ever received. Thus terminated the efforts of the Portuguese at discovery in this portion of America. May not these adventurers have been sacrificed to the retributive justice of the aborigines for the abduction of their brethren? The European shallop, containing eight savages, one of whom was dressed in European clothes, and who visited Gosnold, on his arrival on our coast, may have been the relics of one of the many disastrous voyages which came to so fearful an end.[1]

The notice of Cortereal's second voyage is contained in a letter writ-

[1] Brereton, in his narrative of Gosnold's voyage of 1602, thus speaks of this visit: "On the morning of the 14th of May, we made the land, . . and standing fair along by the shore, about 12 of the clock the same day, we came to an anchor, when eight Indians in a Basque Shallop with mast and sail, an iron grapple and a kettle of copper, came boldly aboard us, one of them apparelled with a waistcoat and breeches of black serge, made after our sea fashion, hose and shoes on his feet; all the rest, saving one that had a pair of breeches of blue cloth, were naked." This was in latitude 43 degrees, which would correspond with that of Portsmouth, N. H., off the mouth of Piscataqua river. We have no further or other account of this shallop, where she came from or what became of her.

ten from Lisbon by Pasquiligi, the Venetian ambassador, to his brother, eleven days after the arrival of Cortereal's vessel at Lisbon, October 15, 1501.[1] It is published in the exceedingly rare work called "Mondo Novo," the New World, issued in Italian, at Vincenza, in 1507, of which only two copies are known to exist in this country; and these, one in the original language, the other a French translation, are both in the library of Harvard College.

Soon after this time, fishermen from France, either in pursuit of the whale, or having heard of the abundance of cod on the banks of Newfoundland, began to visit the coast in pursuit of a traffic, which has never failed to yield employment and a profit to all who have engaged in it. They were the first nation to enter upon the American fisheries, which they commenced as early as 1504, seven years after the first discovery of the country; and so great was their success, that within thirteen years after, fifty vessels, principally French, were employed in the business. In 1577, the same nation had 150 vessels in the same employment, and were associated with vessels from every other commercial nation in Europe. The English were not found there until 1517; but in 1522, they had made such progress, that they had erected on Newfoundland 40 or 50 houses for the convenience of their fishermen, which, although it was not a permanent, was the first attempt of the English at colonization on our shores. We have no evidence that these fishermen visited any other part of the American coast, or made any attempt to settle or occupy the country. In 1506, John Denys, of Honfleur in France, published a map of the coast of Newfoundland and neighboring country, a document which is not known to be in existence.[2]

The next voyage to our continent, of which we have any account, was conducted by John de Verazzani, under the direction of Francis I. of France, in 1524. He was a Florentine by birth; the narrative of his adventure is contained in his letter to the king, dated July 8, 1524, and given to the public for the first time by Ramusio, in his great and invaluable collection of all the voyages and travels of which any written evidence remained. This rare work was published in Italian at Venice, in 1550, accompanied by the able commentaries of this learned scholar. It was translated into English by Richard Eden in 1555, and since freely used by Hakluyt and other collectors of the early voyages.

To this adventurer is due the merit of furnishing the earliest original account we have of the Atlantic coast of the U. S. Verazzani left the Madeira Islands in January, 1524, with one vessel and 50 men; he pursued a westerly course, and in 49 days reached the coast

[1] We are aware that the voyage here spoken of by Pasquiligi, has, until quite recently, been considered the first of the Cortereal voyages. But the researches of Kunstmann in the archives of Portugal, published at Munich in 1859, have revealed new facts, which render almost certain a voyage in 1500 prior to the one described by Pasquiligi. See Dr. Kohl, 1 *Maine Hist. Col.* 2d series, p. 168.

[2] The early Portuguese or Spanish visitors to the coast, either Cortereal's men, or the fishermen, undoubtedly gave the name *Baccalaos*, which Cape Breton bore on the early maps, and in common use, for more than a century after its discovery, on account of the quantity of cod fish found about that island. The word, which means "dry cod," is in the Portuguese language, *Bacalhao*, in Spanish *Bacalaos*, and in Italian *Baccala* and *Baccalore*. In the Italian, the definition is *stock fish*, which is nothing more than cod hard dried in the sun. There is a small island on the east coast of Newfoundland, about 40 miles north of St. John, still called *Bacalieu*. or *Bacaalos*. In an old Spanish dictionary of 1623, in my possession, the definition of *Bacalaos* is "a kind of new-land fish."

*

in about the 34th parallel of latitude, in the vicinity of Cape-Fear, North-Carolina. Finding here no suitable harbor, he sailed southerly along the coast to about the latitude of Florida, and perceiving the land continue low, and stretching southward, he retraced his course, and made at last the harbor of Newport in Rhode-Island. He spent three weeks in this admirable port, of which he gave a particular and accurate description; had friendly and pleasant intercourse with the natives, large numbers of whom constantly visited his ship, exchanging commodities of various kinds; and of whose character and customs he gave an account.

From this place, he sailed along the coast to Newfoundland, touching at various points, and holding communication with the inhabitants; those whom he found on the north-eastern part were much more savage and hostile than those of Narraganset bay. He says: "they clothe themselves in skins of bears, lynxes and other animals; their food is obtained by hunting and fishing and certain roots; they have no pulse, and we saw no signs of cultivation. The land appears sterile and unfit for growing of fruit or grain of any kind." He adds, "we found here a more elevated country, full of very thick woods." Further north-east, he says, "we found the country more pleasant and open, free from woods; and, distant, in the interior, we saw lofty mountains, but none which extended to the shore." How clearly this description indicates the coast of Maine, with the distant white mountains, the most conspicuous objects as you approach from the sea.

He returned to Dieppe in Normandy, in July of the same year, from which place he addressed to his patron, Francis I., a letter dated July 8, giving an interesting narrative of his voyage. The original letter was found in a library at Florence, of which a new and corrected translation was published by the New-York Historical Society in 1841. Hakluyt had published in his collections an imperfect copy, taken from Ramusio.

In this letter Verazzani says: "My intention was to reach Cathay on the extreme coast of Asia, expecting, however, to find in the newly discovered land some such obstacles as they have proved to be, yet I did not doubt that I should penetrate, by some passage, to the eastern ocean." We are thus furnished with additional proof, that we are indebted for the discovery of this portion of America at least, to the insatiate passion after the rich products of the East. Verazzani made a second voyage in the following year, from which he never returned; it was reported that he was killed and eaten by the savages; but no authentic account of his fate is known to exist.

The next series of voyages to the American coast, was undertaken by the French, and were different in their plan and purpose from every previous one. They had been led by the great success of their fisheries to consider the expediency of planting colonies in the neighborhood of that rich field of commercial pursuit. To accomplish this object, Jaques Cartier, under orders of the brilliant Francis, who patronized the former expedition, sailed from St. Malo in France, April 20, 1534, with two vessels, both under 60 tons, and arrived at Newfoundland in 28 days. He spent three months in exploring the gulf of St. Lawrence, and gave names to prominent points, which they still retain.

In May of the next year, 1535, he sailed on his second voyage, with

three vessels and 110 men, well equipped and provisioned. He entered the river St. Lawrence, of which he was the first European discoverer, and proceeded with his fleet as high up as the isle of Orleans. Having concluded to winter in the country, he moored his vessels in the river St. Charles, under the shadow of the heights now occupied by the city of Quebec, at the base of which was the large Indian village named *Stadacona*. From this point Cartier, with a pinnace and two long boats, proceeded up the river to the famed village of *Hockelaga*, now Montreal, which he reached October 2d. He ascended the mountain, which overhung the village, and enjoyed the magnificent scenery that still delights the numerous tourists who visit that beautiful spot. He gave to the place the name of *Mount Real*, or Royal Mountain, which is perpetuated in the name of the city which adorns the site of the aboriginal town. He returned to his fleet on the 11th of October, and after a severe winter, and the loss of twenty-five of his crew, he left his anchorage on the 6th of May O. S., and proceeded homeward, arriving at St. Malo on the 6th of July, 1536. He took with him the Indian chief Donnacona, and nine other natives, whom he abducted, whose strange and novel appearance made a great sensation in France.

In 1541, Cartier made a second voyage to the scene of his former discovery, with a large and better appointed fleet, and with liberal appliances for establishing a colony in this new domain. This expedition was fitted out under the leadership of La Roche, Lord Roberval, who by some mischance did not accompany Cartier; but who followed, the next year, with a portion of the fleet intended for the joint operations. Cartier, without waiting for orders from his chief, proceeded directly to his former anchorage, penetrated still farther up the St. Lawrence, even over the rapids of Lachine, built a fort above Quebec, and spent another winter in the country. Roberval not joining him as he expected, he broke up his establishment, and commenced his return voyage in the spring of 1542. At Newfoundland, he found Roberval with two large vessels and 200 persons, well supplied with provisions and other means to reinforce his colony and to continue the occupation of the country, of which he had been appointed governor. But Cartier, from some unexplained cause, abandoned the enterprise, returned home, and left Roberval to pursue his voyage, unaided by the valuable experience which Cartier had obtained by his visits to the country.

Roberval, a man of great energy, talent and hope, not discouraged by Cartier's desertion, entered the great river, explored the adjoining country, built a fort, and made preparations for founding a permanent colony. But his companions, many of whom were from the higher classes of society, being unaccustomed to the rigor of this northern climate, found the winter too long and severe; many died, and the rest, discouraged, returned to France in 1543.

In 1549, Roberval undertook another voyage to accomplish the unfinished work of his former adventure; but this noble cavalier, worthy of success and a better fate, perished, with all his company, by the way.

Thus terminated for the remainder of the 16th century all efforts by the French to establish their dominion in this part of the new world, to which they had proudly given the title of *New-France*. Their

first permanent success was realized in the beginning of the 17th century, under the guidance of that gallant and noble gentleman, Samuel Champlain, who not only made extensive discoveries, and established French nationality in this country, but illustrated his works by his pen, and has left an imperishable name in the annals of history, as well as on the beautiful lake which perpetuates his memory.

It was upon the discoveries of Verazzani and those of Cartier and Roberval, and their attempts at colonization, that France claimed title to the whole Atlantic coast from Florida to the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and the vexed and irritating question was never settled, until the whole country came into possession of the English, by the peace of Paris in 1763. And why was it not a good title, according to the doctrine and uniform practice of that day? If they had planted colonies upon the soil they had discovered, their title would have been perfected to the Atlantic coast as it was to Canada. The *prima vista* of Cabot was earlier by four years than the larger and more detailed observation of Verazzani; but the latter touched at more points and made more protracted visits to the natives, and gave more full accounts of them, than did the Cabots. The English, too, for a hundred years, abandoned the country they had first discovered, and left it open for new adventurers and new claimants.

And although the English, early in the next century, dotted the whole coast from Cape Hatteras to the Penobscot with their colonies, except New-York, pre-occupied by the Dutch, yet the French argument was not without force; it had solid ground to stand upon.

Their occupation of the St. Lawrence and Canada, was superior, and that under de Mont in the St. Croix and at Port Royal were equal, as a title, to the occupation of Sagadahoc by Popham. But the English afterwards took possession and *kept* possession, which was a stronger argument than the subtle doctrine of *prima vista*. "He may take who has the power, and he may keep who can."

The reign of Henry VIII., and of his son Edward, and daughter Mary, passed without any movement, even towards a discovery of the long desired passage to Cathay by the north-west, although Sebastian Cabot, living through these reigns, never ceased to proclaim his unwavering faith in its existence. And although discourse, petition and project, by Michael Lok, Jenckynson, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and others, closely followed one another, tending to magnify the importance of such a passage, and the certainty of its existence; yet neither were the government nor individuals persuaded to invest their funds in so hazardous an enterprise. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth was half spent, that prominent parties were induced once more to engage in the adventure. Among these persons were the Earls of Leicester and Pembroke, and other noblemen and gentlemen, who, in the name of the "company of Cathay," fitted out an expedition, and placed it under the command of Martin Frobisher as "Captain General and Admiral of the ships."

He sailed in June, 1576, with two barks, neither of which exceeded 25 tons—less than the common mackerel fishers of our time—and a pinnace of 10 tons, to make a voyage of Northern discovery! An enterprise which now exacts the best efforts of mechanical skill and the power of steam, to contend with the ice and fearful storms of the polar regions. What would Franklin, or Kane, or Dr. Hayes say to a

polar voyage in these little cock-boats of 25 and 10 tons? Braver hearts or more daring souls, do not now exist, than those which 300 years ago attempted to penetrate those ice-bound seas—but the vessels are shocking to think of!

Frobisher, on his voyage, came no farther south than Newfoundland; he discovered the strait which bears his name, between Labrador and Greenland, which he penetrated a short distance, and brought home a quantity of earth and sand, which he supposed to be gold bearing ore. This so excited the cupidity of the adventurers, and the curiosity of those people, who were let into the secret, that a new and a much larger expedition was fitted out, to which the Queen, carried away by the enthusiasm of the company, contributed £1,000, with the sole and express purpose of loading the ships with this golden earth. All thoughts of Cathay, the original object of the company, seem to have been abandoned, and their minds were filled with the hallucination of an immediate golden harvest. The vessels in due time returned, laden with the precious mineral; assayers from the continent were procured, and all the processes known in that day were employed to turn it into the pockets of the greedy, expectant adventurers. And while the process was going on, a new fleet was hastily equipped, and Frobisher made his third and last voyage in 1578, to this northern *El Dorado*, for still more of the coveted material. But tempest and shipwreck sunk and scattered the fleet, and the portion saved returned in a forlorn condition, having entirely failed in the object of their pursuit.

In the mean time, the cargoes of earth, after patient and protracted tests, were found to be worthless; and the hope and glory and wealth expected from these great adventures, the largest which had been undertaken in England, utterly vanished, to the sad loss and discomfiture of all who had engaged in them, leaving nothing but recriminations and quarrels behind.

The next attempts to solve this perplexing problem of the Northwest passage, and to establish colonies on the American shore, were made by members of the Gilbert and Raleigh family. These were Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Walter Raleigh, his half brother Adrian, and the Raleigh Gilbert who was afterwards Admiral of the Popham colony.

Humphrey Gilbert and Walter Raleigh were men of noble character and daring enterprise: they were scholars as well as adventurers. Gilbert, in 1566, petitioned the Queen to allow him to seek for a passage to Cathay, which he was confident existed, with certain privileges to be granted to him. He followed this the next year with another petition, setting forth the conditions on which he would undertake the discovery at his own cost. Nothing came of this. In 1576, he published a discourse in quarto form, having previously written articles on the subject, which have not been preserved, to prove the existence of a passage by the north-west to Cathay; he contributed to Frobisher's voyages, and in 1579, under a liberal charter for colonization, he embarked to take possession of the country which had been assigned to him, Raleigh heartily assisting his efforts. But by dissensions and other mischances the voyage was broken up, and was not resumed until 1583, when a new fleet was equipped, consisting of five ships, well manned and prepared to take possession of the

country for England, and to establish a permanent colony there. He sailed from Plymouth in June, and, on August 3d, he entered the harbor of St. John, Newfoundland; and notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of the foreign fishermen, who were pursuing their accustomed occupation at the Island, he proclaimed his title in the presence of the numerous fishermen there, and set up a monument, inscribed with the arms of England, as a testimonial of sovereignty, and jurisdiction over the 200 leagues of territory to which his charter extended. The charter defined no particular territory, but "gave him free liberty and license to discover, finde, search out and view, such remote, heathen and barbarous lands, not actually possessed by any Christian prince or people, as to him shall seem good."

On the 8th of August, Sir Humphrey wrote to Sir George Peckham, one of his associates, described his taking possession, and says: "Of the Newfoundland I will say nothing until my next letter. Be of good cheer, for if there were no better expectations it were a very rich demesne, the country being very good and full of all sorts of victual as fish, of fresh water and sea fish, Deer, Pheasants, partridges, swans and divers fowls."—Alas! no other letter came from this noble Christian gentleman! Insubordination among his crew, and other adverse circumstances, induced him to retrace his way; and abandoning one of his vessels, with the three remaining ones he left the island, and proceeding as far south as Penobscot Bay, he encountered a September gale, which wrecked his largest vessel, in which 100 men perished. On this mischance he changed his course homeward. Embarking himself, in the pinnace of ten tons, scarcely larger than a common sail boat, the gallant commander, in the midst of another violent gale, was carried down at midnight with his whole company. The Hind, the only survivor of this gay and hopeful fleet, which, three and a half months before, had left its moorings in Plymouth, freighted with valuable lives and large expectations, returned in a crippled condition to her anchorage, on September 27th. No part of the coast, except Newfoundland, appears to have been visited or seen; no colony was left, and the possession, so formally taken, was abortive.

In looking back over the century which we have been rapidly surveying, it is sad to reflect how many noble lives perished, and what a vast amount of wealth was wasted, in attempts to explore the northern regions of this continent from its first discovery to find this visionary and useless passage to India; the search for which is not yet abandoned.

This century, so prolific in speculation, adventure, and disaster, came to its close with the persistent but unsuccessful efforts to establish colonies on the southern coast, by that admirable cavalier, Sir Walter Raleigh. Having obtained a charter from Queen Elizabeth in 1584, with powers and privileges similar to those granted to his brother-in-law, Gilbert—a roving commission to seize and occupy any vacant territory not previously possessed by any Christian people; with ample authority for colonization and government—Raleigh fitted out an exploring expedition. Admonished by the disasters of a northern voyage, he sought in the south a milder climate and more propitious elements. On the 13th of Sept., 1584, his fleet entered Ocracock Inlet in North-Carolina, opened intercourse with the natives,

examined the surrounding islands and bays, and returned home in September with glowing accounts of the climate, the country, and their pleasant discoveries.

The associates were so encouraged by these animating representations that the next year they fitted out a larger expedition, consisting of seven ships, with a colony of 108 persons, under command of skilful leaders, and with the necessary materials for planting a colony. But this effort, and a succeeding one in 1587, though well appointed in all particulars, utterly failed from various causes. Among them were, the ill treatment of the natives, their eager pursuit of gold, to the neglect of the cultivation of the soil, and the mercenary conduct of the commander of the expeditions. The discovery of the Chesapeake Bay had been made on the second voyage, and the neglect of the leader of the third voyage to establish his colony on its beautiful shores, as he had been instructed to do, was among the causes of its fatal result. The whole party which was left in the country on each of the two last visits, waiting long expected succor, miserably perished; their bones only remaining to speak of the fearful tragedy.

Thus closed the 16th century, more than a hundred years after the discovery of this continent, and not a single colony, nor a single European remained on its whole Atlantic coast.

The expeditions which were designed for colonization, were ill prepared to encounter the perils of the sea, the climate, and the savages. All things were new, and strange, and inhospitable; a soil without cultivation, a wilderness in which existed none of the comforts and conveniences to which the new comers had been accustomed; they brought no spirit of conciliation toward the free and lawful proprietors of the country, who were thus rudely invaded by a race, which proudly assumed lordship and supremacy. Another serious cause of failure should not be omitted, and that was the employment, in the various expeditions, of vagabonds and convicted felons, of whom the English nation was but too glad to be rid in voyages of unusual danger.[1]

But notwithstanding the hardships and failures, the toils and sacrifices, of these adventurous men, a certain degree of success followed their disappointed hopes. They were the pioneers who unfolded this new world, and gave to the old continent glimpses of the vast resour-

[1] Pasquiligi, in his letter from London to his brothers, Aug. 23, 1497, speaking of John Cabot's return, says: "The King has promised that in the spring our countryman shall have ten ships, armed to his order, and at his request has conceded him *all the prisoners*, except such as are confined for high treason, to man his fleet.

Sainsbury's Calendar of East India papers quotes a document relating to Frobisher's 2d voyage as follows: "Names of the prisoners who Mr. Frobisher hath out of certain prisons to go with him to Cathay, and their offences, mostly convicted of robbery by the highway"—the number was eleven. This was April, 1577. In his instructions, May 17, he was ordered to receive no disorderly person, "except such as ye have received by our order, that were prisoners and condemned persons." It is added, "to leave six of the condemned persons in Friezland to learn the state of the country." But these facts do not sustain the statement of some recent writers, that the Popham Colony of 1607, on the Kennebec, was designed as a convict establishment. The proprietors, Sir F. Gorges and others, in this undertaking, were laying the foundations of a State, which some of them were to occupy and govern, and were taking measures to give value to their large territorial possessions. The supposition that they were commencing their improvements by placing a colony of convicts on their domain, is not only absurd, but would indicate a want of intelligence and common sense in men who were thought competent to discharge the duties of Chief Justice of England, and to fill other important and responsible positions in the realm. The evidence to support such statements has either been misunderstood or misapplied.

ces that lay dormant within it. It was the better fortune of the next century, although of like perilous adventure, to open it to Christian civilization, material prosperity, and ultimate freedom. All honor to the daring zeal of adventure, and wild spirit of enterprise, which sent forth those bold and hardy men on their great and providential mission ; they built better than they knew—they labored and endured, and we have entered into their labors.

The histories of these achievements are partly hidden in foreign archives ; but much is largely recorded in works of great value rarely to be found in this country. Ramusio, Gomara, Peter Martyr, Richard Eden, André Thevet's New France, the Atlas of Ortelius—*Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the most complete work of the kind which had appeared—Hakluyt and Purchas, mines of rich but crude ore—De Laet's *Novus Orbis*, and other laborious writers, have preserved to us narratives of the great perils, enterprises, disasters, and results, which the amazing discovery of this new world occasioned and accomplished. And the Maine Historical Society has just issued from the press its first volume of the "Documentary History of Maine," containing a history of the voyages to the eastern coast of America in the 16th century, prepared from original sources by Dr. J. G. Kohl, of Germany, illustrated by the earliest maps, a valuable contribution to American history.

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